Canadian FILM WEEKLY

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OUR BUSINESS by N.A. Taylor

Downbeat for the nonce

A drop in attendances at our box offices will usually result in a spate of downbeat stories in magazines and newspapers throughout the world.

Time Magazine came up with a dandy a couple of weeks ago. While undoubtedly they put more research into their writings than the average newspaper might do, there was still mis-statement and inaccuracies. Some of these were pointed out by our editor in his column in this magazine last week.

How much harm does this type of story do? This is not the first time in the history of our busines, when the box office has been weak, that we have been subjected to this type of reporting. Notwithstanding, it is only fair to say that when things do start to improve the upbeat articles again appear.

Quite frequently, in writing or in speech, what is not said creates an inference which may be more damaging than what is actually stated. According to the article in Time Magazine, "Easy Rider" cost $400,000.00 and now all the distributing companies are looking for films which can be made at this cost. The danger in this kind of statement is that the public will infer, or asume, that from now on they are going to see nothing but cheap quickies for which they will have to pay the higher tariffs, which we are forced to charge under present day economic conditions. This could, therefore, affect theatre attendances.

It is not easy to make a film for $400,000, which will sell tickets at the box office, and it hasn't been for years. Inflation has had the same rising cost effect on motion picture production as in many other areas. It's one thing to tighten belts and eliminate waste in motion picture production. However, it is another thing to try and squeeze all production into a $400,-

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Academy Award nominees include three Canadians

Of the 26 pictures nominated in the top categories of the 42nd annual awards event of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Universal's Anne of the Thousand Days starring Canadian actress Genevieve Bujold led the way with 10 nominations, and 20th Century-Fox, with 16 nominations, headed the list of companies which were honored. The National Film Board received 2 nominations in the short subject categories.

Z, a Cinema V release, distributed in Canada by Cinepix, qualified for five nominations including best picture and best foreign language film. The last time that a motion picture was nominated for these two awards, in the same year, was in 1938. The film at that time was Jean Renoir's La Grande Illusion.

An oddity of this year's nominations is the fact that of the 20 actors and actresses named in the star and supporting star fields, not one has previously received an Oscar.

The awards will be presented Tuesday, April 7, in the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in Los Angeles. ABC will cover the event which will be sent around the world via communication satellite.

The following is a complete list of the 1969 Academy Award nominations:

BEST PICTURE — Anne of the Thousand Days, Universal; Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, 20th Century-Fox; Hello, Dolly!, 20th Century-Fox; Midnight Cowboy, United Artists; Z, Cinema V.

DIRECTION — Arthur Penn, Alice's Restaurant; George Roy Hill, Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid; John Schlesinger, Midnight Cowboy; Sydney Pollack, They Shoot Horses, Don't They?; Costa-Gavras, Z.

GENEVIEVE BUJOLD

ACTOR — Richard Burton, Anne of the Thousand Days; Dustin Hoffman, Midnight Cowboy; Peter O'Toole, Goodbye, Mr. Chips; Jon Voight, Midnight Cowboy; John Wayne, True Grit.

ACTRESS — Genevieve Bujold, Anne of the Thousand Days; Jane Fonda, They Shoot Horses, Don't They?; Liza Minnelli, The Sterile Cuckoo; Jean Simmons, The Happy Ending; Maggie Smith, The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie.

SUPPORTING ACTOR — Rupert Crosse, The Reivers; Elliot Gould, Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice; Jack Nicholson, Easy Rider; Anthony Quayle, Anne of the Thousand Days; Gig Young, They Shoot Horses, Don't They?.

SUPPORTING ACTRESS — Catherine Burns, Last Summer; Dyan Cannon, Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice; Goldie Hawn, Cactus Flower; Sylvia Miles, Midnight Cowboy; Susannah York, They Shoot Horses, Don't They?

STORY AND SCREENPLAY (based on material not previously published or produced) — Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice; Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid; The Damned; Easy Rider; The Wild Bunch.

SCREENPLAY (based on material from another medium) — Anne of the Thousand Days; Goodbye, Columbus; Midnight Cowboy; They Shoot Horses, Don't They?; Z.

ART DIRECTION — Anne of the Thousand Days; Gaily, Gaily; Hello, Dolly!; Sweet Charity; They Shoot Horses, Don't They?

CINEMATOGRAPHY — Anne of the Thousand Days; Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice; Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid; Hello, Dolly!; Marooned.

COSTUME DESIGN — Anne of the Thousand Days; Gaily, Gaily;

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James Mason to star in Cdn. backed film

Ross Film Productions, Ltd., a Toronto company, has announced the signing of James Mason to star in The Yin & the Yang (formerly Touch & Go), to be directed by Burgess Meredith. Meredith also wrote the screenplay and will play a featured role in the film. Principal shooting began Dec. 15th in Hong Kong.

Financing for The Yin & the Yang will be 100% Canadian, under the long range plan developed by Ross Films president, Ian Ross, to involve Canadian capital in the international motion picture market, via employment of Hollywood technical knowhow and talent. Budget for Yin-Yang is "comfortably under one million dollars,,' according to Ross.

Previous Ross involved motion picture production was Mission Batangas, a joint venture of Ross' Diba Productions, Ltd. and Batangas Productions.

movie reviews

By GARY TOPP

Salesman

Salesman, distributed by Film Canada, is a remarkable 'cinema verité' documentary which tells you so much more than you could possibly desire to know, but no less than you really ought to know. It is a movie which tells about the travelling salesman, with his cool talk, his cool dress, his agonized antics, his callousness and his definite sense of disreputability.

Salesman follows the day-to-day life of the door-to-door salesman as he spontaneously discovers the ugly reality of his life. A team of four Bible salesmen, from the Mid-American Bible Corporation, attend a sales meeting in Chicago, and begin a 'mission' in Florida. Three of the four are true believers and as such, truly believe that "money is being made in the Bible business" and that "someday I will be rich!" The fourth, through the course of the film, begins to understand what his dreary situation is actually about — loneliness, falseness, hollowness, "these people are croaking me".

Alan and David Maysles (whose document it is) set out to prove that the myth regarding the reduced status of the occupation is correct and that the world of commerce tends to have an ill effect on human beings deeply involved in it. They succeed most admirably.

The camera can capture only that truth that chooses to be exposed. Whether or not the characters are being honest with themselves as well as the camera is of no real importance — no matter what the exhibition, the film-makers have captured the very truthful roles imposed upon the salesmen at the moment of recording. That role turns out to be one of total desparation; one which seems to be the result of "99% perspiration, 1% inspiration — you've got to push, push, push, and once you've lost that push, you've had it".

Salesman is a fantastic exposé, especially revealing in its photography, and finely edited to a perfect pace. It avoids nothing as it reveals once again, the horrid truth of a horrid situation . . . the death of a (sales)man.

★ ★ ★

The Honeymoon Killers

The Honeymoon Killers must be seen to be believed. Its hard to imagine anyone taking the movie seriously even though it does deal with a serious topic, based on actual newspaper and police records.

This unbelievable movie retells the story of Martha Beck and Raymond Fernandez, the lonely hearts murderers, who were executed for their ghastly crimes at Sing Sing on March 8, 1951. Fat Martha, played by Shirley Stoler, is a middle-aged, dumpy nurse; Ray, played by Tony LoBianco, is a greasy fanatic who marries and preys upon lonely old ladies. Martha is bound to Ray by mad jealousy; we never really discover why Ray is bound to Martha.

For myself, The Honeymoon Killers took the form of an outrageous parody of the bad Hollywood movie — an extremely amateur exploitation cheapie. It was as if the producers had put all of their information and know-how into a hat, threw the hat into the air, let everything fall out and formulated the film as they haphazardly glued the pieces together.

But please don't get the impression that The Honeymoon Killers is a rotten motion picture. It is great entertainment, a very enjoyable disaster made up of actors with as much dramatic range as that of a goldfish, under/over exposed cinematography, blinding lighting effects which, at times, completely wash out the entire picture, sound that seems to have been recorded through walkie-talkie sets, and a ridiculous screenplay which contains more funny lines than any in the best produced comedies.

To quote a remark from the audience, "The Honeymoon Killers is a real neat show!" Anyone with a real neat sense of humour should not miss it.

HAROLD M. BELL

Appointed sales manager of Prima Film Inc. for all of Canada, with the exception of Quebec, Bell has more than 30 years' experience in the motion picture industry. He will be responsible for the sales and distribution of the films released by Prima to theatres and television stations. Bell's office will be located in Toronto at the King Edward Sheraton Hotel, 37 King St. East, Suite 9.

Our Business

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000 mould. It cannot be done. No matter what is attempted in the future, films which cost this sum of money and sell tickets at the box office, will continue to be the exception rather than the rule. . .

It is easy to state that motion pictures no longer require stars, and that an enormous amount of money can be saved by using unknowns. However, no knowledgeable theatre man will suggest the discarding of the star system. It is true that some of our so-called "established stars" no longer carry their weight at the box office. But new young stars are appearing in the firmament — young people who will appeal to our younger patrons. More about this next week.

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Editor: ED HOCURA

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Award nominees

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Hello, Dolly!; Sweet Charity; They Shoot Horses, Don't They?

DOCUMENTARY FEATURE — Arthur Rubinstein — The Love of Life; Before The Mountain Was Moved; In The Year of the Pig; The Olympics in Mexico; The Wolf Men.

DOCUMENTARY SHORT — Czechoslovakia 1968; An Impression of John Steinbeck: Writer; Jenny is a Good Thing; Leo Beuerman; The Movie Machines.

EDITING — Hello, Dolly!; Midnight Cowboy; The Secret of Santa Vittoria; They Shoot Horses, Don't They?; Z.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE FILM— Adalen '31, Sweden; The Battle of Neretva, Yugoslavia; The Brothers Karamazov, U.S.S.R.; My Night With Maud, France; Z, Algeria.

MUSIC (original score for non-musical) — Anne of the Thousand Days; Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid; The Reivers; The Secret of Santa Vittoria; The Wild Bunch.

MUSICAL PICTURE — Goodbye, Mr. Chips!; Hello, Dolly!; Paint Your Wagon; Sweet Charity; They Shoot Horses, Don't They?

SONG — Come Saturday Morning, The Sterile Cuckoo; Jean, The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie; Raindrops Keep Fallin' On My Head, Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid; True Grit, True Grit; What Are You Doing The Rest Of Your Life?, The Happy Ending.

LIVE ACTION SHORT — Blake, NFB; The Magic Machines; People Soup, Columbia.

CARTOON — It's Tough To Be A Bird, Disney Productions; Of Men And Demons, Paramount; Walking, NFB.

SOUND — Anne of the Thousand Days; Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid; Gaily, Gaily; Hello, Dolly!; Marooned.

SPECIAL VISUAL EFFECTS — Krakatoa, East of Java, ABC-Cinerama; Marooned, Columbia.

I.A.T.S.E. executive, John A. Shuff dies

John A. Shuff, who served as international secretary-treasurer of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employes and Moving Picture Machine Operators of the U.S. and Canada, (I.A.T.-S.E.) from 1965 until 1969, died recently in Miami, Florida.

IT'S MY BAG

By Ed Hocura

It stands to reason that what develops in a court case to be heard in Toronto this week will have an effect on theatre owners in all parts of Canada. **Cinema 2000,** which claims to be North America's first commercial videotape theatre, is facing obscenity charges involving the showing of **Russ Meyer's Vixen.** The fact that the film is shown on videotape does not have it come under the jurisdiction of the **Ontario Board of Censors.** This has perplexed some people in the film industry who feel that the fact that the film is shown on videotape should not exclude the owners of **Cinema 2000** from abiding by the same rules they have to adhere to. And they were further perplexed when the videotape theatre was granted a license of amusement. Which, to them, meant that **Cinema 2000** could continue to show films on videotape that licensed theatres could never hope to play without the sanction of the **Ontario Board of Censors.** But whether they will continue to be perplexed depends on the outcome of the court case. Summonses charging showing an obscene film and possession of an obscene film for the purpose of publication were served to the operator by **Metropolitan Toronto** morality police. Prior to the serving of the summonses, police seized all four prints of the film the theatre had, but three copies were later returned and showings resumed. It was reported that 18,000 people had paid three dollars each to see **Vixen** in the three weeks it had been showing at **Cinema 2000.** As any exhibitor will readily admit, that's good business for the best of films to do. And if the outcome of the court case turns out in favor of **Cinema 2000,** through some legal technicality, who's to say that similar videotape theatres will not be springing up all over Canada? Which means that what is now an isolated case of showing an uncensored movie on videotape mushrooming to national proportions. And there isn't a theatre owner in the country who won't have cause to worry if this happens. Those theatre owners who tend to regard a videotape operation not as competition are only kidding themselves. Those that do regard it as a serious threat must strongly consider the thousands of dollars they are losing from potential customers who are flocking to see **Vixen.** It is the latter who will be waiting with more than passing interest the outcome of the case which will be heard on February 27.

☆ ★ ★

NAMES THAT PASS IN THE NIGHT: If **Genevieve Bujold** should win an **Oscar** for her performance in **Anne Of The Thousand Days,** she will be the fourth Canadian-born actress to achieve the honor. The others were the late **Marie Dressler, Norma Shearer** and **Mary Pickford . . . Russ Meyer,** the King of the Nudie films, has impressed **20th Century-Fox** with his first legitimate theatrical production to the point where he has a new three-picture contract. Which would indicate that **Darryl** and **Richard Zanuck** feel that Meyer has come up with a potential box-office winner in **Beyond The Valley Of The Dolls,** and they don't want any other studio to grab him . . . Two war documentaries that **Arthur J. Kelly** filmed in the 1950s will be shown during a two-month film festival in London, England, starting in April. Kelly, who lives in **Brantford,** was contacted by the **Canadian Film Archives** in Ottawa for permission to allow **This Most Gallant Affair** and **The Abbe On Monte Casino** to depict Canada's participation in the First World War and the Second World War at the film festival. Needless to say Kelly agreed since his works will be on the same program with war documentaries from almost every country in the world. The film festival will be held in the Imperial War Museum. In recent years, Kelly has confined his activities to staging and writing plays depicting Brantford's history. He has a new one slated to be presented sometime in April . . . There wasn't a happier person to be found in **Toronto** this past week than **Bill Pfaff.** He held an open house for his new headquarters for **Mavety Film Delivery Ltd.** and his friends and associates in the film industry were on hand to wish him well. A truck is a truck is a truck, as far as I have always been concerned, but after listening to **Bill Pfaff** talk about trucks delivering cans of films to his theatre customers, they now have a new meaning . . . Producer **Frank McCarthy** is coming to **Toronto** to beat the publicity drums for **Patton,** which will have its Canadian Premiere at the University on March 11. Both the war film and **George C. Scott** have come in for heaps of praise from American critics . . . Another Hollywood personality to make the publicity rounds in Toronto was **Shirley Stoler,** whose performance as Fat Martha in **The Honeymoon Killers** will never make her a threat in the best actress race. But no one can deny that the hefty actress isn't more true-to-life for the unsavory role she plays in the modest crime thriller than if it had been played by a seasoned professional . . . **Phil Stone** may be director of public relations for the **United Jewish Welfare Fund,** but he still likes to keep up with the show business world. He writes a breezy weekly column for a Toronto chain of newspapers that people in show business should make a habit of reading.

☆ ★ ★

TWIRLING THE DIAL: For the past few weeks I have been nothing short of amazed at the audience response to a movie quiz radio show I do on **CHML** in **Hamilton.** The format of the show is quite simple; listeners phone in questions, and if I fail to come up with the answers they win a pair of passes to a local theatre which always gets a mention of what is playing. During the most recent show, 4109 busy signals were recorded by the station switchboard on the 10 lines that are left open for listeners to get through. This method of recording busy signals gives **CHML** an idea of how many people listening to the program are interested in phoning in questions to win theatre passes. I don't like to think that I am keeping 4109 people from going out to the movies, but what I am amazed at is the fact that so many people are not watching television. Especially on a particular Thursday night when they have the choice of a hockey game, **Dean Martin, Tom Jones** or **Paul Newman** in **Hud** to watch on television. The program always begins with a brief discussion between myself and a moderator on current movies playing in **Hamilton.** We then proceed to take the calls, which sometimes take up only a few seconds or longer if it's someone who is more interested in discussing censorship or a particular movie. There must be other radio stations in Canada that would be interested in this phone-in type of radio program. And I'm sure that if any theatre manager would take the trouble to discuss the possibility of a radio station in his town or city doing a show of this type, the station manager would consider it. Radio stations are interested in program ideas that are different from the norm. And they would only have to verify with **CHML** as to the number of listeners a movie quiz radio show attracts. Every town or city in Canada must have someone who is a bonafide movie nut who would be willing to go on the air and have listeners pose questions to him. He could be the movie critic from the local newspaper, or even someone on the staff of the station. At a time when distributors and exhibitors have become disenchanted with film critics, the possibility of having a radio program devoted exclusively to movies has to be something worth going after. The fact that on some nights I have to give out 15-20 pairs of passes should not be cause for alarm for theatre owners. Because who is to say that the people who get the chance to see a movie for free will not be pre-sold by coming attractions to pay next week? I'm just throwing this suggestion out because I don't know of another radio station in Canada that devotes an hour of prime time to movies. But **CHML** must think it's worth it because what was once a monthly show is now on every Thursday night.

Famous Players plans to promote Cdn. art

Sixty artists belonging to the Art Guild of York-Scarborough soon will have a series of theatre galleries in which to show their work it was announced by Famous Players Canadian Corp.

A group of 10 paintings will be hung in the lobby of the Eglinton Theatre in Toronto with another six to be exhibited simultaneously in the University. Later, the Towne and Country, Golden Mile and Thorncliffe theatres will be added. The guild has approximately 300 canvasses ready for showing.

The paintings will be for sale but Famous has made arrangements with the guild to have 10 per cent of all revenue donated to Variety Village, a vocational school for handicapped boys located in Scarborough.

Mrs. J. E. Barnard and Mrs. W. H. A. Alexander represented the Art Guild in discussions with Richard Kressin, Famous' construction and design supervisor who himself is a painter and conceived the art gallery program as part of Famous Players' 50th anniversary celebrations this year, the basic aim being to stimulate interest in the work of Canadian artists.

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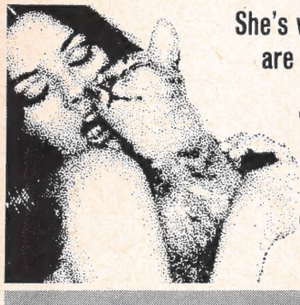

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